



VR-TENNCARE MOU FOR EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY FIRST CHOICES MEMBERS: PROCESS OUTLINES

PROCESS OUTLINE #1: REFERRALS

Process Outline Title	Referral of Employment and Community First CHOICES Member for Application to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Process
Effective Date	May 1, 2017

Purpose: This Process Outline is to help with the referral/application process for persons enrolled in TennCare's Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES program to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bureau of TennCare, Division of Long Term Services and Supports (hereinafter "TennCare"), and the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Program (hereinafter "VR"). ECF CHOICES and VR are programs related to the Employment First philosophy, which is based upon the concept that all citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. Because both VR and TennCare offer employment supports for people with disabilities through these respective programs, this Process Outline is intended to ensure that each agency effectively works together to provide those services to common customers in coordination with the other to ensure efficient use of resources and effective delivery of services.

Definitions:

Common Customers – individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities aged 14 and up, who are receiving services through the ECF)CHOICES program and who choose to receive vocational rehabilitation pre-employment transition services and/or are determined eligible for VR employment services with the goal of obtaining competitive integrated employment or self-employment, including customized employment and supported employment.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment – assessment conducted at least once annually and as needed with an ECF CHOICES eligible individual to assess strengths, preferences, natural supports, interest in pursuing employment, physical and behavioral health and long-term service and support needs, etc.

ECF CHOICES Member – A person who has been enrolled by TennCare into ECF CHOICES.

ECF CHOICES Support Coordinator (also referred to as the “MCO Support Coordinator”) – The individual who has the primary responsibility for case management and support coordination activities for an Employment and Community First CHOICES individual.

Employment – under this Process Outline shall mean “competitive integrated employment,” full or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities and has access to the same opportunities for benefits and advancement provided to non-disabled workers.

Employment Needs Assessment (ENA) - a VR assessment that determines and documents the specific employment objective and the nature and scope of VR services to be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). An ENA begins at VR application and must have the full inclusion of the individual in determining the specific employment objective and the services needed to achieve the employment objective.

Extended Support Plan (ESP) – a plan that documents the specific extended support services, support strategy, and the source of extended supports prior to moving the case into Status 22. This plan helps to ensure that the member has supports to maintain employment, and ensures the sources for extended supports have been identified.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) - the VR plan which documents the individual’s specific employment objective, the services and service providers, terms and conditions, individual and VR responsibilities required to achieve the individual’s employment objective. The VR Counselor and individual (or his or her legal representative) are required to sign the form before services can be provided.

Managed Care Organization (MCO) - a health maintenance organization (“HMO”) that participates in the TennCare program.

Person Centered Support Plan (PCSP) - A written plan developed by the MCO Support Coordinator using a person-centered planning process that accurately documents the individual’s strengths, needs, goals, lifestyle preferences and outlines the services and supports that will be provided to the individual to help them achieve their preferred lifestyle and goals, and to meet their identified unmet needs.

Referral Process Outline Summary:

Pursuant to obligations defined in the MOU between TennCare and VR, and related to the Employment and Community First ECF CHOICES Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Program, TennCare MCOs and VR are required to follow specific procedures to complete the Vocational Rehabilitation Application Process. This Process Outline details those procedures, including all related documentation sharing requirements.

Referral Process Outline:

I. Vocational Rehabilitation Application Process:

a. Introductory Notes:

- i. The VR Application Process is meant for those ECF CHOICES Members who have expressed an interest in competitive integrated employment.
- ii. MCO Support Coordinators should ensure the Member consents to being assisted with the application process before assistance is provided.
- iii. The “application” will be made, upon Member’s consent, to VR via the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** (instructions provided below).
- iv. It’s important for individuals to apply far in advance of the ECF CHOICES Service End Date to ensure a seamless transition of employment services from ECF CHOICES to VR without any gaps in services.
 1. This means that **while** an ECF CHOICES Member is receiving Exploration, Discovery or other pre-employment services, the MCO Support Coordinator should begin the referral process for Members interested in competitive employment so that the VR application process can be completed **on or before** the ECF CHOICES services end date. This will ensure that Members transition seamlessly (with no gap in services) from ECF CHOICES services to VR Program services.

b. If a Member has requested assistance with the VR application process, the MCO Support Coordinator will complete the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.

- i. Fully complete the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** with accurate *ECF CHOICES Member Information, Representative Information, and Support Coordinator Information*.

1. MCO Support Coordinator shall not complete the last box of the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**, labeled “This section is to be completed by VR Program Office ONLY.”

- ii. Attach to the Form all applicable Supporting Documentation that is listed in the Form’s *Shared Documentation Checklist* (located at end of Form), which includes the following:

- a. Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- b. Person-Centered Support Plan
- c. Disability Documentation
 - i. Only documentation originating from a specialist.
 - ii. Include any relevant documentation about an individual’s disability, such as: school, medical, psychiatric, and psychological reports/records.
- d. Any previous or current ECF CHOICES employment service reports, plans, and documents related to competitive integrated employment (if applicable).
- e. Guardianship documents (if applicable)

- f. Copy of signed Release of Confidentiality Information
 - iii. Be sure to note on checklist all documents that are being submitted with the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.
 - c. Sending the Application:
 - i. Prior to submitting the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** and Supporting Documentation, the MCO Support Coordinator shall determine the Member's Authorized VR Region.
 - 1. Authorized VR Regions are based on the Member's County of Residence.
 - 2. See **DRS Regional Offices with Counties Served Guide**.
 - ii. The MCO Support Coordinator will email the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** and Supporting Documentation to the Authorized VR Regional Office contact listed on the **DRS Regional Offices with Counties Served Guide**.
 - d. Once VR receives the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**, VR will complete the Application Review Process:
 - i. VR will make a determination of VR Program Eligibility within 60 days of receipt of the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.
 - ii. Within five (5) business days following eligibility determination, a representative from the applicable Authorized VR Regional Office (hereinafter referred to as "VR Counselor") will notify all involved parties as follows:
 - 1. The individual or individual's guardian/legal representative (must contact according to the preferred method of contact, as evidenced on the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**);
 - 2. MCO Support Coordinator (via email); and
 - 3. Provider (via email or phone)
 - e. Vocational Rehabilitation Intake Session:
 - i. The MCO Support Coordinator will assist the individual with attending the intake session.
 - 1. Assistance may include, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Helping the individual arrange transportation;
 - b. Reminding the individual of the appointment date, time and location
 - c. Preparing the individual with what to expect during the intake session
 - d. Making sure they bring all necessary documentation, including:
 - i. Verification of SSI; or
 - ii. Verification of SSDI



VR-TENNCARE MOU FOR EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY FIRST CHOICES MEMBERS: PROCESS OUTLINES

PROCESS OUTLINE #2: ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

Process Outline Title	Ongoing Responsibilities of MCO Support Coordinators and VR Counselors for the Employment and Community First CHOICES Program
Effective Date	May 1, 2017

Ongoing Responsibilities Process Outline Summary:

Pursuant to obligations defined in the MOU between TennCare and VR, and pertaining to the Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Program, TennCare MCOs and VR are required to fulfill specific ongoing obligations. This Process Outline details those obligations.

Referral Process Outline:

- I. VR Counselor (VRC) Ongoing Responsibilities in supporting ECF CHOICES Members:
 - a. Introductory Notes:
 - i. The following process is intended for those ECF CHOICES Members who have expressed an interest in competitive integrated employment, and are eligible to receive VR services.
 - ii. The MCO Support Coordinator and VRC must work together and communicate as indicated below to ensure that ECF CHOICES Members transition between the ECF CHOICES Program and the VR Program seamlessly. The goal is to ensure that the Member does not experience any gaps in service provision.
 - b. Development of the Employment Needs Assessment (ENA) and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) :

- i. The VRC will complete the ENA to determine the employment services needed by the ECF CHOICES Member. This assessment is used by the VRC to inform the IPE.
 - ii. The IPE should be written as soon as possible, preferably while the ECF CHOICES Member is completing his/her pre-employment service (if applicable) to ensure there is no gap in employment services.
 - iii. VRC shall arrange for a meeting with the individual and/or the individual's legal representative in order to review and sign the IPE.
- c. VR Counselor shall share the signed IPE with all other involved parties:
 - i. MCO Support Coordinator (via email, and only with consent from the individual); and
 - ii. Applicable Provider.
- d. The VRC will provide updates on the status of the IPE using the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** to the MCO Support Coordinator:
 - i. During the time the individual is receiving VR employment services, the VRC shall provide progress updates to the individual's MCO Support Coordinator (with consent of the individual) when the following occurs:
 - a. Completion of the IPE (Status 12)
 - b. VR Services begin (Status 18)
 - c. Member starts new job
 - d. Member changes jobs, if applicable
 - e. Member reaches Job Stabilization Coaching (Status 22)
 - f. Case preparing for closure- send the ESP
 - g. Member's VR case is closed (Status 26; 28; 30)

II. MCO Support Coordinator Ongoing Responsibilities:

- a. Assisting with development of the IPE:
 - i. The MCO Support Coordinator shall assist the VRC as needed by doing the following:
 - 1. Answering questions;
 - 2. Provide additional documentation as needed;
 - 3. Assist with Member contacts, if needed; and
 - 4. Encourage Member to participate fully in the IPE process.
- b. Authorization of Additional Employment Services:
 - i. While the member is receiving VR services, if there is a need for additional, different ECF CHOICES employment-related services that are not available through VR, the Support Coordinator shall authorize such services after completing each of the following:

1. Amending the Person Centered Support Plan (PCSP) to reflect that the employment service is needed and not otherwise provided by VR; and
 2. Update the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**
 - ii. Additional services may include supports for medical or behavioral needs while training on the job or working.
- c. Address Immediately Needed Employment Services:
- i. If the ECF CHOICES Member needs employment services immediately, the MCO Support Coordinator shall ensure such needs are addressed in the PCSP. These needs can include:
 1. Services provided through ECF CHOICES that the MCO Support Coordinator will authorize;
 2. Services available outside of ECF CHOICES, including benefits counseling from Benefits to Work program, assistance from American Job Centers, etc.
 - ii. If VR Program eligibility determination exceeds 60 days, or if the development of the IPE exceeds 90 days, and the Member has a need for immediate employment services, the MCO Support Coordinator shall authorize the needed ECF CHOICES employment services after completing the following:
 1. Amending the PCSP to reflect why the ECF CHOICES employment services are needed and not otherwise available immediately through the VR Program; and
 2. Update the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members** to ensure there is no duplication of services once VR services are initiated.

III. Winding Down of Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

- a. Sharing Extended Support Plan (ESP):
 - i. At least four (4) weeks prior to the end of VR Stabilization Job Coaching, VR Counselor shall arrange for a meeting with the individual and/or the individual's legal representative in order to review and sign the ESP.
 - ii. At least four (4) weeks prior to the end of VR Stabilization Job Coaching, VR Counselor shall share the ESP with the Support Coordinator and update the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.
 - iii. ESP shall specify whether there is a need for extended supports and identify any sources for those supports
 - iv. Upon receipt of ESP the Support Coordinator shall authorize needed ECF CHOICES employment services.
 1. Effective date for extension of services shall be set to ensure there are no gaps in VR employment services between the end of VR Stabilization Job Coaching and initiation of ECF CHOICES employment supports.

IV. Closure of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Status 26; 28; 30):

a. Sending the Closure Letter:

i. If individual completes Job Stabilization Coaching:

1. Within five (5) business days of their VR case being close, the VR Counselor shall send the closure letter to:

- a. The individual or individual's guardian/legal representative (must contact according to the preferred method of contact, as evidenced on the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**); and

- b. Update the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.

ii. If the individual's case is being closed for any reason other than the end of Job Stabilization Coaching:

1. The VR counselor shall notify the Support Coordinator at least two (2) weeks prior to the end of VR services by updating the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.

2. Within five (5) business days of their VR case being closed, the VR Counselor shall send a copy of the closure letter to:

- a. The individual or individual's guardian/legal representative (must contact according to the preferred method of contact, as evidenced on the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**; and

b. Sending Confirmation of Extended Supports:

- i. At least ten (10) days prior to the end of VR Stabilization Job Coaching, Support Coordinator shall update the **MOU Notification Form for Employment and Community First CHOICES Members**.

1. This notification shall indicate that the MCO will coordinate extended supports and be the source of funding for individuals who need on-going supports).

References:

Applicable MOU references to the Application process to VR include:

MOU Section V.C.2
MOU Section VI.B.11
MOU Section VI.B.14
MOU VII.C.7

Applicable MOU references to the Document sharing process between VR and TennCare's contracted Managed Care Organizations (MCO) include:

MOU Section V.C.2
MOU Section V.F.3
MOU Section VI.B.12.a-g

Applicable MOU references to ongoing responsibilities include:

MOU Section V.C.2
MOU Section V.C.3

MOU Section V.D.3
MOU Section VI.B.13
MOU Section VII.B
MOU Section VII.C.9